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Economy of the Sacred in Hellenistic and Roman Asia Minor by B. Dignas

Review by: Andrew Erskine

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variegated contributions nor draws together common threads. It seems introductory only in its explicit engagement with Millar's interests both inside and outside historical study. However, it is certainly an interesting exercise which succeeds in illuminating both sides of the comparison. Subsequent pieces are more strictly historical in focus. Amélie Kuhrt reflects on the wisdom of academic struggles to combine Assyrian and Jewish accounts of a clash between the state of Judah and the Assyrian Empire in order better to understand a crucial stage in the former's development. Stephen Mitchell moves us further west to consider the possible causes of the distinctive identity of the Pontic region from the outset of Greek settlement through to the Roman period. Daniel Schwartz then returns us to the Levant as he explores apparently contradictory notions of *eleutheria* and *autonomia* in the works of Josephus.

We encounter the city of Rome for the first time as Katherine Clarke attempts to respond to Millar's well-publicized dissatisfaction with Tacitus as a historian. Paul Zanker then turns our attention to the physical city as he explores Domitian's vision of an appropriate imperial home and the interaction of public and private spaces within it. Turning to lower levels of imperial government, Werner Eck seeks to reconstruct the norms of careers in imperial administrative bureaucracy through prosopography. Finally, Peter Garnsey takes a further chronological leap forward as he attempts to establish what role the obscure Lactantius has to play in the search for the intellectual influences of the higher-profile Augustine.

Clearly, a properly critical review of all contributions to this volume is impossible from a single reviewer. The subject material involved is far too broad and so evaluation must be confined to general observations. First and foremost, the volume maintains high academic standards. The Millar celebrations were not an occasion for the trotting out of store-cupboard papers — these are detailed analytical pieces arising from areas of active research. Despite the general clarity of argumentation, they are not intended as beginners' introductions and those not already tolerably familiar with the subject material will struggle to appreciate them fully. All authors link their work to Millar's own interests through subject matter, but most also acknowledge debts to his general methodological approaches or to specific criticism of past research which had made the piece in question possible or even necessary. On a strictly practical note, all papers are carefully referenced by footnotes, there is generous provision of figures and maps where they are necessary, and a systematic bibliography of Millar's work.

However, it seems unlikely that any single reader will find the whole work of great interest. The significance of the complete volume is simply to recognize the breadth and depth of scholarship that Millar has achieved himself and the degree to which he has provided scholarly inspiration to others. Detailed perusal is not really necessary to achieve this end — a glance through the editors' preface and contents page will suffice. As with most works of the festschrift-type, the real value of this volume lies in the role of the individual component essays as contributions to their respective fields of research. That is something I suspect the man at the centre of all this academic effort would find perfectly reasonable.

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LISA BLIGH

B. DIGNAS, *ECONOMY OF THE SACRED IN HELLENISTIC AND ROMAN ASIA MINOR*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. Pp. xiv + 364, 5 maps. ISBN 0-19-925408-7. £55.00.

Ritual, pollution, myth — these are usually the subjects of studies on Greek religion, so it is refreshing to read a book on rather more practical aspects. The sanctuaries of the Greek world could be places of considerable wealth in the form of both temple treasures and land, and it is their economic role that Dignas examines in this revision of her Oxford D. Phil. thesis. Not infrequently wealth is a source of division and corruption; Greek religion, as D. shows, was no different.

This book, however, is as much about the political role of the sanctuaries as their economic one, something that might helpfully have been signalled in the title. As such, it needs to be read alongside not only P. Debord's *Aspects sociaux et économiques de la vie religieuse dans l'Anatolie gréco-romaine* (1982), but also L. Boffo's *I re ellenistici e i centri religiosi dell'Asia Minore* (1985), both of which D. takes issue with. In common with many studies of Asia Minor, D. is able to draw on a wealth of fascinating epigraphic material, all of which is fully indexed. Significant texts are quoted at length and accompanied by a translation.

The emphasis on the political is to the fore in the two main chapters of the book, 'The Cults under Hellenistic Rule' and 'The Cults under Roman Rule'. It is here that D.'s central thesis is most clearly articulated. D. argues that scholars have mistakenly tended to merge cult and *polis* and speak of *polis* religion. She, on the other hand, proposes to separate cult and *polis* and introduces instead a tripartite structure: cult, *polis*, and ruler. This triangular model sees the ruler, whether that be king or Rome, mediating between *polis* and cult. Certainly one should not imagine that the relations between cult and city were always harmonious, especially where matters of money were

concerned, but D. may be pushing her point too far. The local sanctuary was an important source of *polis* prestige, duly acknowledged on a city's coins as Ephesus celebrated the Artemesion and Aizani its cult of Zeus. The overlap between cult and *polis* was extensive, as D. Potter has recently shown in A. Erskine (ed.), *A Companion to the Hellenistic World* (2003), 408–15. D.'s model may rather over-simplify but her discussion gives full weight to the complexity of the relationship between *polis* and cult.

Those studying religion in Asia Minor have often distinguished between different types of cults; opposed to the Greek *polis* cult are the cults variously described as indigenous, rural, or even in the cases such as Galatian Pessinous as 'temple-states'. While acknowledging that distinctions can be made, D. is wary of excessive categorization and would prefer to emphasize the many aspects that these cults have in common with each other, both in their organization and in their relations with the central authority. That the evidence is largely epigraphic and Greek may, however, make cults seem rather more similar than they were in practice.

D. has much of interest to say, not least on the role of sanctuaries as bankers and on the buying and selling of priesthoods, but she has not written a book that is easy to follow; it can be difficult to see where the argument is going. It does not help that discussion of the main examples (e.g. Ephesus, Mylasa and Labraunda, Aezani, Syrian Baetocaece, the latter for comparative purposes) is broken up between sections, making a clear understanding of any particular case hard to attain. Moreover, the repeated stress on the tripartite structure can prove a distraction. She offers, for instance, an insightful and subtle examination of the finances of the Artemesion in the light of Paullus Fabius Persicus' letter to the city of Ephesus on the subject. Yet it is never clear how this is intended to answer the opening question: 'Does the triangle apply to Ephesus?' The letter itself is particularly revealing and reflects a Roman concern with ensuring financial regularity that is not so evident among their Hellenistic predecessors. Pliny's Bithynian sojourn displays a similar preoccupation.

Difficult as D.'s book may be, it offers important challenges to long-established ways of thinking about ancient religion, both Greek and non-Greek.

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ANDREW ERSKINE

C. EILERS, *ROMAN PATRONS OF GREEK CITIES*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. Pp. xiii + 334, 5 tables, 3 figs. ISBN 0-19-924848-6. £ 50.00.

This book, a reworked version of the author's Oxford doctoral thesis, is a thorough but highly readable treatment of the subject of Roman patronage of Greek cities. Methodologically, Eilers has little patience with social scientific or historical comparative approaches to Roman patronage. Instead, he chooses to focus directly on those situations where Romans or their subjects explicitly refer to a given relationship as involving patronage. His argument is that the social scientific definitions of patron-client relations thus far adopted by ancient historians have tended to be too all-inclusive, to the detriment of our understanding of the precise meaning of Roman patronage. While it is true that Roman social life was characterized by a great variety of relationships involving socially unequal individuals, the distinctions between these relationships should not be blurred in order to gather them all under the single unifying label of 'patronage'. Such an approach is unhelpful precisely because, as E. is able to show by means of reference to a variety of literary and legal sources, the Romans themselves knew very well when a relationship involved patronage and when it did not, and who was whose patron or client. Since the Romans clearly regarded patronage as a distinct and well-defined type of relationship between two parties that involved certain reciprocal obligations, it is the task of modern historians to recover the exact nature of that relationship from the fragmentary ancient evidence. It is precisely this that E. sets out to do in his book, using Roman patronage of Greek cities as a case study.

Some 150 Roman patrons of Greek cities are attested in epigraphic and literary sources from the late Republic and early Empire. In a catalogue at the back of the book, E. provides the inscriptions or passages concerned, with translation and detailed commentary. This collection of data will surely greatly facilitate future research on the topic, but it also serves to underscore E.'s point that with city patronage, we at least have a significant body of material at our disposal for studying patron-client relationships, and for clarifying their nature. In their inscriptions, the Greeks borrowed the Latin term *patronus* (πάτρων) to describe patron-client relationships. According to E., this indicates that patronage was viewed as a foreign, Roman institution that had been imported into the Greek world. Only Romans are attested as πάτρων. Also, the borrowing of the term shows that patronage was regarded as distinct from other relationships between the city and powerful individuals (such as, for instance, public benefactors) because a separate terminology was used to describe it. In the chapters that follow, E. describes how cities could become clients and Romans patrons, what both parties got out of the relationship, and the reasons for the rise and decline of city patronage in the period from the late Republic into the early Empire.